



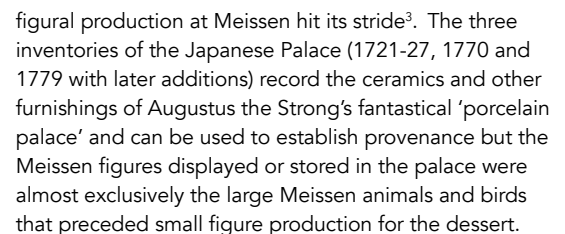
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**Meissen Porcelain Figures in the
Royal Court Pantries in Dresden,
Warsaw and Hubertusburg:**

A Crash Course in the
Hof-Conditorei inventories taken
ahead of the Seven Years War¹

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In the intervening quarter century, notwithstanding that some Meissen figures and tablewares are marked "K.H.C." for *Königliche Hof-Conditorei* [Royal Court Pantry] and that three centuries of court pantry inventories survive in the *Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Dresden, the go-to sources have been and remain the *Arbeitsberichte*, the historic manufactory work reports held by the Meissen archives, and the Japanese Palace inventories deposited in the *Porzellansammlung* and in the *Hauptstaatsarchiv* in Dresden². The *Arbeitsberichte* are weekly logs of the activities of the modeling studio staff and allow us to date a model and assign it to one sculptor or another. Some entries indicate who commissioned the model or the intended recipient but there is no confirmation that a model was actually cast in porcelain or how many examples of a model might have been produced. Also, the work reports were suspended from 1749-54 and again during the Seven Years War, 1756-63, so there are critical gaps just as

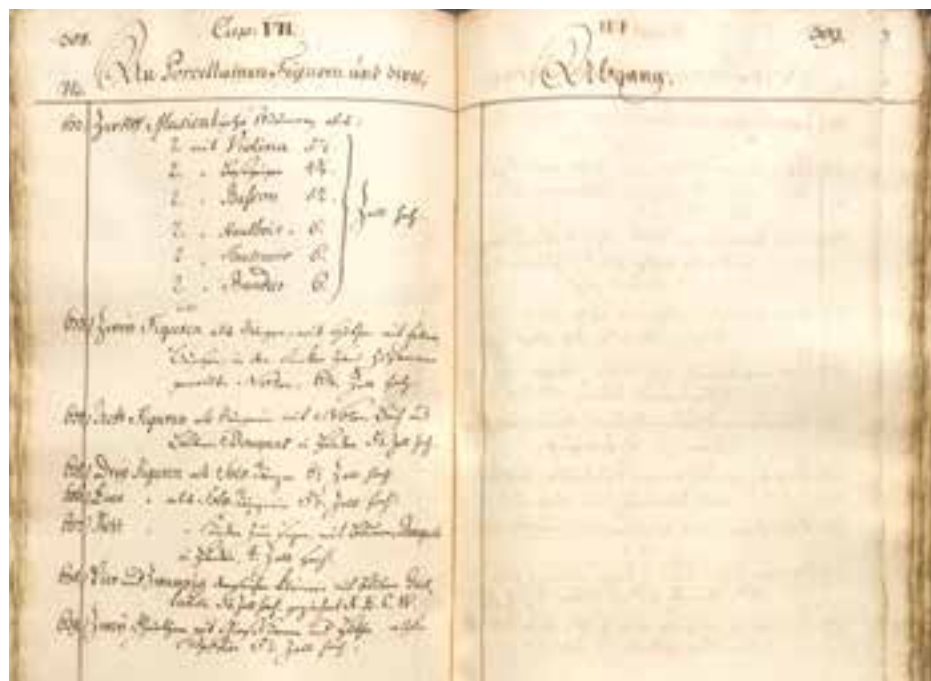


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The court pantry was responsible for the edibles and table decorations for the dessert course, the grand finale of any formal meal. The figures and other porcelains required for setting the table were stored in the pantry in cabinets, wooden crates and crowded shelves that probably resembled modern museum storerooms or study storage. The pantry was one of four distinct departments involved in mounting a state banquet. The others were the court kitchen, which prepared the savories for the first three courses of the meal, the court cellar, which was responsible for the beverages and drink wares, and the silver vault, which provided the precious table wares and some porcelain dishes. The pantry was the only department with porcelain figures.



The porcelains and other equipment belonging to the court pantry were inventoried at different points in time. The 1733 inventory has entries through 1748 (Fig. 1). The first figures commissioned for table decoration appear in the *Arbeitsberichte* in 1735 but this production was not for the king; rather, it was for Count Sulkowski and his successor, Count Brühl. The first porcelain figures commissioned for the royal table were decorations for the three royal marriages of 1747; they appear in the *Arbeitsberichte* in 1746 and were delivered to the court pantry between 1746 and 1748. According to the inventory, there were three times as many white figures as enameled ones; of the approximately 1400 small porcelain sculptures, 320 were polychrome and 1065 were white. This number does not include dozens of pedestals for figural sculptures, trees, regalia, small vases and the hundreds of architectural components required for a classical temple⁴. The 1752 inventory (with additions through 1764) lists approximately 3000 figures; around 1000 were enameled and twice as many were white (Fig. 2).





today were acquired in the early twentieth-century to round out the eighteenth-century holdings and are not, therefore, directly descended from the royal court pantries.

Small Meissen figures were also deployed on ministerial tables and accompanied diplomatic gifts. In 1753, Count von Brühl owned approximately 2000 figures, enameled and white⁷. 184 Meissen figures were shipped to Russia in 1745 with the St. Andrew Service, over 200 were gifted to France in 1747 and 172 figures went to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams in 1750. Add these to the numbers in the royal inventories and there were at least 11,000 Meissen dessert figures in existence by the outbreak of the Seven Years War and half were glazed white⁸. Comparison of the Dresden and Warsaw inventories, however, shows that dozens of figures inventoried in the Dresden *Hof-Conditorei* were actually transferred to Warsaw in 1748, where they were inventoried again. Thus the total of 11,000 is incorrect and must be reconsidered⁹. Nevertheless, the scarcity of glazed white Meissen figures today aligns with the recent scientific evidence for later enameling on rococo models (Fig. 6).

The 1750 Warsaw and 1752 Dresden inventories exist in duplicate. Presumably one copy was kept by the *Oberhofmarschallamt* (chief household administration) while the other was on-site in the pantry. At some point one copy of each inventory was updated in pencil (see Fig. 2), perhaps during the consolidation of 1768, indicating such significant losses and damage to the collection, the 1841 tally of just fifty-one figures is unsurprising. Although most of the entries are very specific in naming and describing a figure in a way that correlates with known models, helped by very precise measurements, large numbers of *Commedia* figures in the 1752 Dresden inventory are lumped together as if the secretary didn't know who was who: "147 Stück, verschiedene Mannes. Masquerade- u. Theatral. Figuren" or "26. Stück Masquen in Domino." In some instances, white figures are noted to have painting or gilding applied by the *chef d'office* who was accustomed to painting and gilding sugar sculpture. Children with wings are indicated in the royal court pantries ("Kinder mit Flügeln" or "stehende Cupidos mit Masquen"), as opposed to the children without wings commissioned by *marchands-mercier* for export to France. Monkey Band figures, likewise in the French

Figure 6. A group of white Meissen figures, animals and trees in the Residenz, Munich.

Figure 7a. 7b. A plate and two of several dozen small vases for the dessert in the 'Hubertusburg' pattern. Meissen porcelain, ca. 1740. H. 2.3 cm. Stiftung Ernst Schneider in Schloss Lustheim.



taste, do not appear in the royal inventories though Count Brühl owned at least eighteen. Pieces marked "K.H.C." or "K.H.C.W." are so-noted in the inventories, for example: "598. Acht Groupgen, jede von 3. Kinder, als 1. liegend, das 2te. kniend, und das 3te. stehend 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ Zoll hoch gezeichnet K.H.C.W." Some items marked "K.H.C." were among those transferred to Warsaw and the Dresden mark is indicated in the Warsaw inventory. The bulk of the porcelains were unmarked, however, so an unmarked figure that conforms to an entry could rightly have a royal provenance.

Porcelain from the factory in Meissen came by wagon or boat to the *Warenlager* (warehouse) in Dresden, the way station for porcelain destined for the Japanese Palace, the royal palaces, the fairs or for export abroad. A delivery list for the Hubertusburg court pantry indicates it was assembled between September and November 1755 from stock at the factory and items in the Dresden *Warenlager* (Fig. 4). King August III and his family resided in the palace of Hubertusburg between Oct. 1 and Nov. 29, 1755, spending Oct. 8-17 at the fair in Leipzig. Various family occasions were celebrated at Hubertusburg with a succession of banquets doubtless requiring elaborate desserts. A Meissen table service decorated with butterflies, a pattern long known to collectors, accompanied the dessert figures sent to Hubertusburg, indicating it was a royal pattern which could perhaps be identified hereafter as the 'Hubertusburg' service (Fig. 7)¹⁰.



At his death in 1763, Count Brühl owned at least seven Meissen table services and a royal-size collection of porcelain figures and decorations for the dessert. The Meissen decorations included sixty-two small buildings ("Zwey und sechzig Stück Häuser von diversen Sorten") as well as trees, animals, people, garden architecture and an imposing porcelain miniature of the Mattioli fountain at Brühl's palace in Dresden's Friedrichstadt district.¹¹ Sir Charles Hanbury Williams witnessed the fountain running with rosewater at a banquet for 206 persons hosted by Brühl in 1748, where it functioned



as a representation of the Count's Dresden properties and, by extension, his ministerial position and noble title¹². The visual magnificence of his three-dozen palaces and properties in Saxony and his art collections were a statement of the legitimacy of his position as Prime Minister. Within the Polish realm, he likewise built a network of self-sustaining estates in Grochwitz, Nischwitz, Młociny, Wola, Nowy Świat and elsewhere to convey the same message. Akin to Schloss Pförten in Brody, the Polish estates were conceived by royal architects like Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann and Johann Christoph Knöbel and each featured a palace with formal gardens and water features supported by a town with a church, townhouses, farms and hunting grounds (Figs. 8, 9 and 10).¹³ An inventory of Brühl's pantry taken in 1753 listed nearly a hundred small buildings, naming four churches, three palaces, fifty-one 'townhouses,' thirteen farmhouses and six gondolas, as would be required for representing the Prime Minister's Polish estates in a representational fashion (Figs. 11 and 12).¹⁴ Such buildings were not a feature of the royal court pantries, underscoring the individuality and originality of Brühl's approach to white gold.¹⁵



Figure 8. Aerial view of the former Brühl estate of Schloss Pförten.

Figure 9. Design for the palace for the Brühl estate in Nischwitz. Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, PS-M36-II-Bl. 5.

Figure 10. J. Fr. Knöbel design for a church for the Brühl estate in Wola.





Figure 11. Church. Meissen porcelain, ca. 1750-60. From Melitta Kunze-Köllensperger, *Idylle in Porzellan* (Leipzig, 1996), p. 20, fig. 5.



Figure 12. Townhouse. Meissen porcelain, model ca. 1750. From Melitta Kunze-Köllensperger, *Idylle in Porzellan* (Leipzig, 1996), p. 29, fig. 11.

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1. The inventories under discussion are in the Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, 10006 Oberhofmarschallamt, T, XI, Nr. 53a-b, 54a-b, 60 and 61a-b. I am currently preparing transcriptions of these inventories for publication. For further background, see Maureen Cassidy-Geiger, "The Hof-Conditorey in Dresden: Traditions and Innovations in Sugar and Porcelain", Ulrich Pietsch and Claudia Banz (eds.), *Triumph of the Blue Swords: Meissen Porcelain for Aristocracy and Bourgeoisie 1710-1815* (Dresden/Leipzig, 2010), pp. 120-131.
2. A dozen drawings representing Meissen table decorations of ca. 1745-55 in the Kupferstich-Kabinett in Dresden (inv. nrs. C6644-6659) have likewise been overlooked by Meissen scholars until recently; Reino Liefke and I will both be discussing and illustrating some of the drawings in forthcoming publications.
3. The *Arbeitsberichte* warrants comprehensive study and an annotated edition. Portions of a DDR-era typescript of selected entries were published under the title *Die Arbeitsberichte des Meissener Porzellanmodelleurs Johann Joachim Kaendler 1706-1775* (Leipzig, 2002). For further discussion, see Johannes Rafael, Zur "Taxa Kaendler", *KERAMOS* 203/204, 2009, pp. 25-70. See as well Katharina Christiane Herzog's dissertation "Mythologische Kleinplastik in Meissener Porzellan 1710-1775" [<http://katalog.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/cgi-bin/titel.cgi?katkey=67284063>]
4. Patricia Ferguson traces the history of Meissen porcelain temples in "Felbrigg's Folly: The Meissen 'Temple of Honour' in Dresden", *National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual* 2010, pp. 12-17.
5. For more on Acier, see Pauline Gräfin von Spee's dissertation, "Die Klassizistische Porzellanplastik der Meissener Manufaktur von 1764 bis 1814" [<http://hss.ulb.uni-bonn.de/2004/0530/0530.htm>]
6. Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, Hausmarschallamt, R XVI, Nr. 37, Inventarium über das Churfürstli: Neue Flügelgebäude [...], Taschenberg, fols. 39-49.
7. For transcriptions of the 1753 and later inventories of Brühl's porcelains, see *Schwanenservice. Meissener Porzellan für Heinrich Graf von Brühl* (Dresden, 2000).
8. The quantities exported to France by the marchands-merciers would inflate this number.
9. I have created a spreadsheet to track the numbers and types of table decorations in the inventories, and the losses. The results will be published with the inventory transcriptions.
10. See Julia Weber, *Meissener Porzellane mit Dekoren nach ostasiatischen Vorbildern*, vol. II, pp. 344-356.
11. Not to be confused with his palace on the Elbe.
12. Reino Liefke has overseen the restoration of what survives of the famous porcelain fountain in the V&A and will publish his research; for some background, see <http://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/creating-new-europe-1600-1800-galleries/in-the-middle-of-the-table-was-a-fountain-which-ran-all-the-while-with-rose-water>
13. See Anna Olenska, "Magnificentia principis: Brühl's seats in Poland as a means of his political self-propaganda", Tomasz Torbus, "Baustafungen Heinrich Graf Brühl in Sachsen: Beispiel Nischwitz und Pforten (Brody)" and Jakub Sito, Architekten und Bildhauer im Dienste Heinrich von Brühls in Warschau" in Ute Christina Koch and Cristina Ruggero (eds), *Premierminister und Mäzen. Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700-1763)/ Primo ministro e mecenate. Il conte Heinrich von Brühl (1700-1763)* [forthcoming]
14. Melitta Kunze-Köllensperger, *Idylle in Porzellan: Kostbare Tischdekoration aus Meissen* (Leipzig, 1996). The farmhouse models are known with gilt-bronze mounts, indicating a French clientele for this particular building type.
15. By chance, two churches and two farmhouses appear in the Hubertusburg inventory.